

“Testimonial” of using Open Court Foundation Program

From: Bob & Jen

To: 'Paul J. Wigowsky' <paulj@wigowsky.com>; 'Don Potter' <don@donpotter.net>

Sent: Saturday, August 1, 2015 1:35 PM

Subject: our year of success with Open Court

Hello Don and Paul!

We hope you are doing very well. We have been intending to send you this message since the end of the school year, and did not want to let another month slip by without following up and reporting on our success and expressing our heartfelt gratitude to you for bringing to us the original Open Court Foundations Program, and for making it possible for us to teach our two girls how to read and write through this excellent curriculum.

I wanted you both to know that I did indeed take both of our girls (first grade and kindergarten ages) through the entire Blue Book and Gold Book, following the Teachers' Guide as closely as possible to give our girls the fullest benefit of the instruction and materials. The results? Well, they loved it, of course! But more importantly than that, we saw tremendous growth in their reading and writing abilities. Our oldest daughter, who was really struggling with reading, is now reading quite fluently and has been able to read the Open Court storybooks all the way up to The Stolen Rubies. She is able to read all of the Word Lists for the Blue and Gold Books, and has made tremendous progress in going from sounds to letters, as her writing skills have developed over the year. It has been such a joy to see her confidence and her enjoyment of reading increase so steadily.

Our youngest daughter was already reading fluently before we started Open Court, but she too benefited tremendously from going through the program, particularly the writing aspect. Before Open Court, I had given her no formal training in handwriting or composition, yet after taking her through each lesson, she almost never made a mistake in any of her dictation exercises, and is able to write just about any words and sentences she chooses with very few errors.

We hope this gives you both an encouraging glimpse of the fruit that your efforts are already bearing in the lives of children who need these skills. And so, all of this to say that we cannot possibly express to both of you how thankful we are for bringing us this excellent language arts program. Our daughters have been so blessed by it that we are actually trying to find the next levels of the program so we can continue with it (so far we have been able to find copies of the Teachers' Manuals at one of our local university libraries – so it's a start!). Though we know the Foundations program is really your area of expertise, if either of you know of anyone we could get in touch with or any resource we could use to rebuild the next levels of the program, we would greatly appreciate hearing about it. Don, we know you have been working on a book about Open Court, and we can't wait to read it when it's done. Please let us know when it's available! I've been reading Harold Henderson's book Let's Kill Dick and Jane, and have found it very interesting, particularly from the perspective of a homeschooler who questions the effectiveness of the public education system.

We also want you to know that the use of the Open Court Foundations Program is not ending with us – there is one other homeschooling mom from our church co-op who is already taking her struggling third-grader through the Blue Book, and plans to take her twin sons through the entire program as well. There are also a couple of other moms who have shown interest in the program, so I am considering doing an orientation session for anyone who wants to get a basic

idea of how the O.C. Foundations program works. (Incidentally, any input that either of you may have on the subject would be greatly appreciated, and we hope you don't mind if we direct people with more in-depth questions to you!) Paul, we could not have done any of this without the time and painstaking effort you put in to provide us with all of the materials – what a god-send!

Thank you again, from the bottom of our hearts, and may God continue to bless your "Resurrection" of this great reading program.

Gratefully yours,

Jen and Bob

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Bob & Jen,

Thanks for the great "testimonial" about the Open Court Foundation Program. Can I use your "testimonial" (email) on my Open Court web page to show potential parents-teachers and others of the value of the Open Court program? Btw, I checked online and saw that the 2nd grade program (after 1st grade Blue and Gold books) is available online. The original textbook we used was called Reading is Fun, but it was revised (very few changes) in 1985 as On a Blue Hill. The book is very inexpensive, and you can use all the skills you learned from the 1st grade manual to teach your "advanced" students the next level (Level C).

Paul

P.S. I'm attaching a list of the books we used in the Open Court reading program -- compared to a list from the Headway program. Both editions are valuable and useful, but Headway tended to add and revise where they deemed it was necessary (i.e. changing times). If you wish, I can send you Table of Contents (scanned pages) of both editions so you can compare.

[On a Blue Hill Level C \(Headway Program\): Marianne Carus: 9780896884502: Amazon.com: Books](#)

Paul,

This is just GREAT! The very impact we hope to have. You gave them some good advice on the second grade book.

I just heard that the new *School Phonics* that was similar to Open Court is no longer available. That means that we are the ONLY people on the planet promoting the old Open Court or anything like it.

Don

Hi Paul!

It's great to hear back from you! Yes, of course you may use our "testimonial" about Open Court on your website - our only request would be that you would use our first names only, just for security purposes, because we live in such a crazy world these days. But we're so glad if it can serve other parents and teachers in any way. Are you having much success in finding more folks who are interested in Open Court? I certainly hope so - we found it well worth our while.

Btw, I hope I did not offend you when I spoke of "questioning the effectiveness of public schools"... I myself went to public school, and had many excellent teachers, including my first-grade teacher who taught me Open Court! I was more referring to the state of schools today, and how most seem to reject quality programs like Open Court...such a shame. Just wanted to clarify!

Thanks for the tips about the Level C program - we definitely want to continue with it. One thing we are having trouble finding are the workbooks/language skill books - do you have any suggestions where we might find those? We have found some online, but we continue to search to complete our collection. It would be great to see the comparisons of the differing tables of contents you were mentioning - thank you for offering. Also, do you have any idea of where we could find a Teachers' Guide to purchase for Level C? We do have a copy from a local library, but of course we must return it eventually... We are willing to photocopy it if necessary, but we're hoping to avoid that extra work if we can find our own copy.

Again, it's been great hearing from you, Paul!

Best wishes,

Jen

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Jen,

Thanks for your permission to add your testimonial to my Open Court web page.

I do not advertise or keep count of the Open Court visitors, so I'm not sure how many people are using the material we have online.

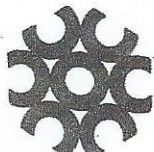
I'm sorry I can't help you with a Teachers' Guide - I searched online and couldn't find any. When I retired from teaching in 2003, I didn't take any guides with me. You were lucky to find one in the local library.

Thanks again,

Paul

P.S. Attached is a copy of the testimonial and a comparison of the different Open Court Readers.

A Comparison of Open Court Readers (1963-76) and Headway Readers (1979-85)



Open Court Basic Readers

Reading is Fun
A Trip Through Wonderland
Our Country
A Magic World
A Trip Around the World
What Joy Awaits You
But Life Is Calling You
Awake to Worlds Unfolding



The Headway Readers

On a Blue Hill

A Flint Holds Fire

From Sea to Sea

The Place Called Morning

Cities All About

Burning Bright

The Spirit of the Wind

Close to the Sun

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A Trip Through Wonderland vs. A Flint Holds Fire

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A Shiny Golden Path

Rainbow Bridge

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